

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A tread for steer axle tires for a heavy vehicle, the tire having a rolling direction and comprising a radial carcass reinforcement surmounted by a crown reinforcement, the tread comprising at least three ribs separated by grooves of generally circumferential orientation, two of said ribs forming the edges of the tread, at least one rib being intermediate thereto, the at least one intermediate rib having a plurality of incisions of a width of less than 3 mm, a depth E and being of generally transverse orientation and substantially parallel to each other, ~~wherein, each incision has a varying inclination, being oriented relative to a line perpendicular to an the outer surface of the tread at a first angle of not more than 5° from the outer surface to not more than a depth of one-third E, and at a second angle greater than said first angle at a depth greater than one-third E, wherein, wherein each incision has an angular relationship with a line extending perpendicular to the point where the incision intersects at the outer surface, the angular relationship being variable wherein the angular relationship in an outer tread region extending from the outer surface to a depth not greater than one-third E is not more than 5°, and the angular relationship in an inner tread region at a depth greater than one-third E being greater than the angular relationship in the outer tread region, wherein a radially innermost point of each incision is located, relative to the rolling~~

direction of the tire, in front of the ~~points~~ point of the incision which are located on the running surface of the tread when new.

2. (Original) The tread according to claim 1, wherein an average inclination of the incisions is between 5° and 15°.

3. (Currently Amended) The tread according to ~~one~~ of Claim 2, wherein the inclination of a portion of the incision at a depth greater than one-third E is between 5° and 25°.

4. (Currently Amended) The tread according to ~~one~~ of Claim 2, wherein the incisions are spaced in the circumferential direction with a pitch p which satisfies the following relationship:

$$0.5 \leq \frac{S_{ne}}{S_e} \cdot \frac{p}{H} \leq 4$$

wherein, S_{ne} is the total of the surface areas of ribs not provided with incisions of varying inclination,

S_e is the total of the surface areas of the ribs provided with incisions of varying inclination, and[,.]

H is the average depth of the longitudinal grooves (2).

5. (Currently Amended) The tread according to ~~one~~ of Claim 1, wherein the inclination of a portion of the incision at a depth greater than one-third E is between 5° and 25°.

6. (Currently Amended) The tread according to claim 1, wherein the incisions are spaced in the circumferential direction with a pitch p which satisfies the following relationship:

$$0.5 \leq \frac{S_{ne}}{S_e} \cdot \frac{p}{H} \leq 4$$

wherein, S_{ne} is the total of the surface areas of the ribs not provided with incisions of varying inclination,

S_e is the total of the surfaces of the ribs provided with incisions of varying inclination, and[.]

H is the average depth of the longitudinal grooves (2).

7. (Original) The tread according to claim 1, wherein the incisions are arcuately shaped in the radial direction.

8. (Original) The tread according to claim 1, wherein the incisions are formed with at least two rectilinear portions in the radial direction.

9. (New) A tread for steer axle tires for a heavy vehicle, the tire having a rolling direction and comprising a radial carcass reinforcement surmounted by a crown reinforcement, the tread comprising at least three ribs separated by grooves of generally circumferential orientation, two of said ribs forming the edges of the

tread, at least one rib being intermediate thereto, the at least one intermediate rib having a plurality of incisions of a width of less than 3 mm, a depth E and being of generally transverse orientation and substantially parallel to each other, wherein, each incision has a varying inclination, being oriented relative to a line perpendicular to an outer surface of the tread at a first angle of not more than 5° from the outer surface to not more than a depth of one-third E, and at a second angle greater than said first angle at a depth greater than one-third E, wherein, a radially innermost point of each incision is located, relative to the rolling direction of the tire, in front of the point of the incision located on the running surface of the tread when new, wherein the incisions are spaced in the circumferential direction with a pitch p which satisfies the following relationship:

$$0.5 \leq \frac{S_{ne}}{S_e} \cdot \frac{p}{H} \leq 4$$

wherein, S_{ne} is the total of the surface areas of the ribs not provided with incisions of varying inclination,

S_e is the total of the surface areas of the ribs provided with incisions of varying inclination, and[.]

H is the average depth of the longitudinal grooves.